

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 IO-13 L-03

NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01

SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05

ACDA-07 /089 W

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R 071451Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9635

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 15852

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, UR

SUBJECT: CSCE: SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD CBMS IN BELGRADE

REF: (A) STATE 229610, (B) NATO 4211

1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION. WE SUSPECT THAT GENERAL CSCE CONSIDERATIONS GOING BEYOND CMBS WILL DETERMINE THE SOVIET APPROACH TO CBMS AT BELGRADE, AT LEAST IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. BREZHNEV GAVE UNCOMMON SPACE AND STRESS TO CMBS IN HIS OCT 5 INTERVIEW FOR FRENCH TV, BUT THE TOPIC WAS NEVERTHELESS BURIED IN A DEFENSIVE CATALOGUE OF SOVIET COMPLIANCE MEASURES ON CSCE AS A WHOLE. THE SOVIETS ARE MAINLY CONCERNED, AT THIS POINT, TO AVOID A BELGRADE KANGAROO COURT ON BASKET III COMPLIANCE, AND WILL PROBABLY SEE CBMS IN THIS LIGHT. THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A SHORT MEETING TO RECORD PROGRESS, RATHER THAN ASSESS RESULTS OR CRITIQUE PERFORMANCE; CERTAINLY, THEY DO NOT WISH TO REOPEN THE TEXT OF THE FINAL ACT. IF FORCED BEYOND THIS MINIMALIST STANCE, THEY WILL BE INCLINED TO DEFER NEGOTIATION TO SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS. ONLY IF ALL ELSE FAILS WOULD THEY BE WILLING TO ADMIT JUDICIOUSLY PHRASED LANGUAGE ON SUBSTANTIVE POINTS WHICH WOULD CARRY THEM BEYOND THE FINAL ACT. AT THAT POINT, THERE MAY BE SOME CHANCE THEY WOULD ACCEPT

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COMMON CRITERIA FOR OBSERVER TREATMENT, INCLUDING

RECOMMENDATIONS ON A BROADER GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD FOR OBSERVER INVITATIONS, OR SOME NON-USE-OF-FORCE LANGUAGE; AND A SMALLER CHANCE THEY WOULD ASSENT TO LOWERING THE THRESHOLD, OR INCLUDE MORE DETAIL AND EXTEND THE TIME-FRAME ON MANEUVER NOTIFICATIONS. THIS IS A FIRST ESTIMATE; WE WILL KEEP CHECKING AS BELGRADE APPROACHES. END SUMMARY.

2. IT IS DIFFICULT AT THIS EARLY DATE TO MAKE ANY BUT PRELIMINARY JUDGMENTS ABOUT LIKELY SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD CBMS AT THE BELGRADE MEETING. IF THEIR PREPARATIONS FOR BELGRADE HAVE PROGRESSED BEYOND THE INITIAL STAGES, THE SOVIETS ARE NOT SAYING SO TO US.

3. IN HIS OCT 5 INTERVIEW FOR FRENCH TV, BREZHNEV FOUND SPACE FOR A VERY POSITIVE REFERENCE TO DMBS AND THEIR "ESSENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR INCREASING CONFIDENCE BETWEEN STATES." HOWEVER, HE PLACED IT IN THE DEFENSIVE CONTEXT OF A CATALOGUE OF PROOFS OF SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH THE FINAL ACT. IN OUR VIEW, THIS ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE OVERALL SOVIET APPROACH. THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED LEST BELGRADE BECOME A WESTERN KANGAROO COURT TO JUDGE SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN PERFORMANCE SINCE HELSINKI. SINCE THEY STILL FIND A GOOD OFFENSE THE BEST DEFENSE, THEY WILL TAKE A STRONG POSITIVE LINE IN DEFENDING THEIR MEAGER RECORD, AND CBMS ARE PART OF IT. NEVERTHELESS, THE CORE OF THEIR PROBLEM IS BASKET III, AND THEIR REACTION TO CBMS AND OTHER BASKET I AND II ISSUES WILL DEPEND IN SUBSTANTIAL MEASURE ON HOW THEY CALCULATE THAT THESE WILL AFFECT THEIR DEFENSE AGAINST THE EXPECTED BASKET III ASSAULT. IN THIS CONTEXT, CBMS COULD TAKE ON SOMETHING OF THE CHARACTER OF A BARGAINING CHIP, OFFERED AS A LAST RESORT AND GRUDGINGLY AT BEST.

4. TO PROTECT THEMSELVES IN BASKET III WE EXPECT THEM TO TAKE A MINIMALIST POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE MEETING AS A WHOLE. "SHORT AND SWEET" WAS THE CHARACTERIZATION USED BY MFA COUNSELOR OLEG SOKOLOV IN A RECENT MEETING WITH US (MOSCOW 15482). THE OBJECT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MEETING SHOULD BE SIMPLY TO PUT ON THE RECORD THE "PROGRESS" MADE SINCE HELSINKI, HE THOUGHT, AND HE WOULD NOT EVEN AGREE THAT PART OF THE RECORD MIGHT CONTAIN SOME KIND OF EVALUATION OR ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS. EVEN LESS WAS HE WILLING TO CONSIDER REWORKING THE LANGUAGE OF THE FINAL ACT WHICH WAS, HE SAID AGREED TO AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS AND COULD NOT, THEREFORE, BE CHANGED IN BELGRADE BY LOWER LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES.

HOWEVER, HE DID RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SOME SORT OF SUMMARY STATEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING.

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ACTION EUR-12

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5. CLEARLY, THIS OPENING POSITION WILL HAVE TO BE MODIFIED IF THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT BELGRADE SHOULD DO MORE THAN SIMPLY CATALOGUE WHAT HAS BEEN DONE THUS FAR. THE LIKELIHOOD, HOWEVER, OF SOVIET AGREEMENT TO REOPEN ANY OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE FINAL ACT IS NIL. IN THIS THEY WILL PROBABLY HAVE THE FULL BACKING OF THE OTHER EAST EUROPEAN WP STATES (ONLY MAVERICK ROMANIA'S POSITION IS OPEN TO DOUBT) AS WELL AS SOME WESTERN STATES SUCH AS FRANCE AND TURKEY (SEE NATO 5050) AND PERHAPS OTHER EC-9 COUNTRIES (SEE NATO 5182). WE WOULD ESTIMATE THAT, SHOULD THE PRESSURES BEFORE AND AT BELGRADE BE SUFFICIENT TO FORCE THE SOVIETS OUT OF THIS MINIMALIST STANCE, THEY MAY BE WILLING TO CONSIDER, AT MOST, SOME LIMITED, CAREFULLY PHRASED LANGUAGE IN A BELGRADE COMMUNIQUE WHICH MIGHT BE MORE THAN A "RECORD OF PROGRESS." IN PARTICULAR THE SOVIETS MIGHT SEE THEIR WAY CLEAR TO AGREE TO SUGGESTIONS OF EXPANSION OF COOPERATION IN LIEU OF LANGUAGE WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED CRITICAL OF EASTERN PERFORMANCE.

6. SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER THIS FOR CBMS WOULD

DEPEND ON WHETHER THE LANGUAGE CONTEMPLATED: (A) COVERED
AREAS BEYOND AGREED CBMS; (B) SUGGESTED SUBSTANTIAL
CHANGES IN EXISTING CBMS; (C) SUGGESTED MINOR ADJUST-
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MENTS OR CLARIFICATIONS OF EXISTING CBMS; (D) CONSTITUTED
SIMPLE HORTATORY STATEMENTS BASED ON THE EXPERIENCES,
THUS FAR, OF IMPLEMENTATION. OUR BEST ESTIMATE IS
THAT AT BELGRADE THE SOVIETS WOULD STRONGLY OBJECT TO
CATEGORY (A) AS BEYOND THE MANDATE OF BELGRADE. THEY
WOULD OPPOSE (B) AS UNNECESSARY AND PREMATURE, BUT MIGHT RELUCTANTLY
AGREE TO (C) AND/OR (D) PROVIDED THE LEVEL OF COMMIT-
MENT URGED, BUT DID NOT REQUIRE, BASIC CHANGES IN
SOVIET PRACTICES.

7. WITH THIS IN MIND WE THINK THAT OF THE PROPOSALS
SUGGESTED IN PARA 5 OF REFTEL B, THE ONLY ONES WITH
ANY CHANCE OF GAINING SOVIET ACQUIESCENCE, WOULD BE
5A1, 2, 3, AND 5. OF THESE THE FIFTH, ON COMMON
TREATMENT OF OBSERVERS, WOULD SEEM TO HAVE THE BEST
CHANCE SINCE THIS SEEMS MOST CLEARLY TO FLOW FROM THE
EXPERIENCES OF IMPLEMENTATION. IN SUGGESTING THAT
THESE OFFER THE BEST CHANCE FOR SUCCESS, WE SHOULD
BE UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT RESIST
WITH DETERMINATION AND BY USING FULLY THEIR USUAL
DIPLOMATIC METHODS UNTIL NO ALTERNATIVE IS AVAILABLE.
WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE ANNOUNCED SOVIET DESIRE TO
HOLD ONE OR MORE BASKET II-TYPE CONFERENCES MIGHT
OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPROMISES ON BELGRADE
COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE OF INTEREST TO THE WEST, PROVIDED
OF COURSE THAT THE STATE OF ECE DISCUSSION ALLOWED FOR
MOVEMENT AND THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF WESTERN
COUNTRIES REMAIN UNCOMMITTED ON THESE CONFERENCES
UNTIL BELGRADE.

8. REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF OBSERVERS, EASTERN
STATES' PRACTICES ON INVITING OBSERVERS SUGGESTS THAT
IN THEIR VIEW INVITATIONS SHOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY
RESTRICTED TO STATES BORDERING ON, OR IN CLOSE
PROXIMITY TO, THE AREA WHERE THE MANEUVER IS TAKING
PLACE. THIS SEEMS TO US TO BE A VARIATION OF THE
EASTERN POSITION EARLY IN THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS THAT
NOTIFICATION SHOULD BE MADE ONLY TO NEIGHBORING
STATES. ANY ATTEMPT TO STANDARDIZE OBSERVER TREATMENT,
THEREFORE, MIGHT INCLUDE LANGUAGE TO LIMIT THE DE
FACTO REGIONALIZATION OF OBSERVER INVITATIONS PRACTICED
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BY THE EAST. WE CAN EXPECT THE EAST TO RESIST SUCH A MOVE. HOWEVER, BY CONCENTRATING ON THE NEED FOR GEOGRAPHIC VARIETY, WE MAY BE ABLE, IN THE CONTEXT OF ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMON CRITERIA, TO GET EASTERN ACCEPTANCE OF A WIDER GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD IN ISSUING INVITATIONS.

9. IN CONCLUSION, IT SHOULD BE STRESSED AGAIN THAT THESE ARE PRELIMINARY JUDGMENTS. AS THE SOVIETS FOCUS MORE ON BELGRADE, AND AS DECISIONS ON TACTICS BECOME MORE URGENT, THE SOVIETS CAN CHANGE THEIR APPROACH, AND WE WILL BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR TELLTALE SIGNS. THE AGENDA OF DISARMAMENT "INITIATIVES" SET BEFORE THE UNGA BY GROMYKO INCLUDED NON-USE-OF-FORCE AND MILITARY BUDGETS, AND BELGRADE LANGUAGE ON THESE TWO TOPICS, SUGGESTED BY THE ROMANIANS AND SWEDES, COULD GROW MORE ATTRACTIVE WITH TIME. AT THE OUTSET, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET APPROACH TO CBMS IS MOST LIKELY TO BE RESTRICTIVE, CHURLISH, AND OVERWHELMINGLY TACTICAL. THE SOVIETS WILL BE NATURAL ALLIES OF WESTERN PARTICIPANTS WHO WANT TO DO NOTHING, AND ANY MOVEMENT ON THEIR PART WILL HAVE TO BE FOUGHT AND PAID FOR.
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